

WOTC Certifications

The Department of Labor recently released the top 12 leaders in Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program (WOTC) certifications. Indiana came in at number ten only being topped by much larger states like California, Texas and New York.

WOTC was developed as an incentive for employers to hire individuals who are traditionally difficult to place in jobs or have trouble gaining experience in the job market. Any employer who pays taxes and wages is eligible to take advantage of the program and there is no limit to the number of people they can hire.

WOTC served 12,798 hard to employ Hoosier workers and saved Hoosier employers an estimated \$26 million in wage credits last year. For more information contact the Tax Credit Specialist at your local WorkOne Center.

Employment Trends

February Unemployment Rate

Indiana's non-seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for February was 5.9 percent. This is one-tenth of a percentage point below the national rate of 6.0 percent.

2,964,100 million Hoosiers were employed during February.

Indiana's February unemployment rate was lower than Michigan, 7.3 percent; Ohio, 6.6 percent; Illinois, 6.8 percent; and Kentucky at 6.1 percent.

March Unemployment Insurance Stats

Number of UI Claims Filed:

Week of 3-6-04	80,619
Week of 3-13-04	78,409
Week of 3-20-04	75,425
Week of 3-27-04	72,558

Indiana@Work

Indiana@Work requires only state government administrative action, and combines existing Energize Indiana federal funding of \$5 million a year for five years, as well as nearly \$5 million a year for five years in state funds from the Dept. of Commerce training programs.

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An Equal Opportunity Employer

Developments

HOOSIER WORKERS & LIFELONG LEARNING ONLINE NEWS

Breaking News

Indiana to participate in Local Employment Dynamics program

Indiana will soon become the 30th state to participate in a U.S. Census Bureau Local employment Dynamics program. The program takes wage and demographic information already compiled by the states and produces a quarterly report. The report shows where jobs are located, what type of jobs they are and demographic information about the people working the jobs. This information should help local officials with their economic development efforts.

DWD Commissioner Alan Degner said, "I am very excited about the program and we hope it's up and running soon." Local Workforce Investment Boards are hoping also. They believe it will help them target industries that are hiring and it will allow unemployed workers to know where to start looking.

The program costs the federal government \$125,000 per state per year. The additional cost to DWD should be minimal.

Career Majors in Action

A new publication entitled "Career Majors in Action" is now available through DWD. The implementation guide for administrators, principals, teachers and other interested parties is a guide to setting up career majors systems that work for students. Career Majors is about learning through relevant experiences, coupled with rigorous academic standards which lays the foundation for a successful future.

The latest school system to turn to the career academies model is Owen Valley High School located in Spencer. Principal Kimberly Tucker describes the change as using the world as your classroom, rather than allowing the classroom to be your world. Students will spend their first year of high school choosing an academy – engineering, manufacturing and industrial technology; art, design and communications; human services; health service; etc. – and will spend the next three years following a specific course of study.

Owen Valley received a \$30,000 planning grant from DWD and is applying for a \$100,000 implementation grant. They have also received financial help from Boston Scientific and Rose Hulman Institute of Technology.

Grants awarded to the North Central WIB and two Logansport Companies

Gov. Joe Kernan, through the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, awarded \$192,508 to the North Central Workforce Investment Board from the agency's "Energizing Indiana's Workforce" grant funds.

The North Central WIB, representing Cass, Fulton, Howard, Miami, Tipton and Wabash counties, will use its grant to take a more proactive role in upgrading the skill levels of area workers. With the funding, 11 hybrid format credit classes, which combine traditional in-class work with distance education technology, will be developed by IU Kokomo and Ivy Tech State College.

In further support of north central Indiana the Governor traveled to Logansport to announce grants for two Cass County Companies making investments in the local workforce. This will mean skills training for existing workers, as well as the creation of new jobs. M.W. Industries, which is putting \$2.2 million into its Cass County facility is receiving a \$26,500 Skills Enhancement Fund grant to help train 99 current employees and add 15 new jobs. Federal Mogul is receiving a \$14,000 Incumbent Worker Training grant to help four current employees receive upgrades in computer technology skills. Federal Mogul is highly dependent on computer technology to manage its day-to-day business.